

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE 41WASHINGTON TIMES
9 August 1984

Intelligence data released by White House

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THE WASHINGTON TIMES

The Reagan administration yesterday released previously classified information as proof that Nicaragua is the primary supplier of arms to Salvadoran rebels and that some of those weapons came from Soviet-allied nations Vietnam and Bulgaria via Cuba and Nicaragua.

Thomas Pickering, U.S. ambassador to El Salvador, and Gen. Paul Gorman, commander-in-chief of the U.S. Southern command in Panama, showed reporters aerial films and photographs taken by U.S. intelligence off the Salvadoran coast which they said showed Nicaraguan fishing boats unloading crates of weapons to smaller boats. The smaller boats then took the weapons to the Salvadoran coast, where the arms were packed on mules and transported to guerrilla camps, the officials said.

The film was taken a week before El Salvador's May 6 presidential elections. Gen. Gorman said the late April shipment was intended for election-day use by a guerrilla faction in the town of San Miguel, but the attack was thwarted by the Salvadoran army, alerted by U.S. and Salvadoran intelligence.

Other intelligence information revealed that serial numbers taken from U.S. weapons captured from the rebels had been traced to U.S. weapons sent to Vietnam and that captured rebels themselves said the weapons came from Vietnam through Cuba and Nicaragua.

To underscore the Soviet bloc's role on behalf of the insurgents, Gen. Gorman said Salvadoran troops captured Bulgarian ammunition near the town of El Transito. He added that Nicaragua and Cuba are the only countries in Latin America known to use this type of ammunition.

Also made public during the presentation were photographs captured last month showing guerrillas loading mules with a U.S.-made heavy machine gun. Gen. Gorman said mule trains have been spotted on occasion moving through Honduras into guerrilla-held Salvadoran territory.

Also captured, Gen. Gorman said, were Chinese-made rocket launchers similar to those captured by U.S. forces in Grenada. The

weapons captured in Grenada and those captured in El Salvador bore serial numbers in sequence.

Gen. Gorman said Salvadoran government troops captured documents which indicate the rebels were planning a new offensive "very soon." He said some of the information about the offensive, as well as the location of several guerrilla camps and weapons seized from those camps, came from rebel defectors.

"I believe each of these documents demonstrate the validity of President (Jose Napoleon) Duarte's judgment that his country is the victim of a pernicious form of aggression by Nicaragua," Gen. Gorman said.

"In my judgment, President Duarte is right when he castigates Nicaragua for its role in fostering political violence in El Salvador," Gen. Gorman said. "The guerrilla front is ludicrous in insisting that it gets no ordnance from abroad. External support continues to be a mainstay of the guerrillas."

Mr. Pickering and Gen. Gorman said they were releasing 95 percent of the information they had given members of Congress last week, at the request of congressional members from both parties.

The release comes at a time when Congress is considering President Reagan's request for an additional \$117 million to spend in the next two months to bolster El Salvador's army in its civil war with the Marxist-led insurgents.

The Salvadoran military already has received \$126 million in U.S. aid for the fiscal year ending Sept. 30. Both Gen. Gorman and Mr. Pickering called on Congress to approve the additional funds.

"...The democratic government of President Duarte... cannot long endure without U.S. assistance," Gen. Gorman said. "A guerrilla offensive is imminent. The insurgents are determined to damage Duarte's prospects by any means at their disposal, and they possess the means for much bloodshed and destruction."

Gen. Gorman said the money is needed before the end of the summer to meet impending guerrilla attacks, continue improvement in the government army, provide confidence in the continuity of U.S. support and to convince guerrillas and their supporters to accept meaningful negotiations rather than a prolonged struggle."

Included in the information released were pictures of U.S. weapons, such as M-16 rifles, captured from Salvadoran guerrillas. Their serial numbers could be traced to weapons the United States used in Vietnam, Gen. Gorman said.

The U.S. weapons apparently were captured by the Vietnamese and sent to the rebels through Cuba and Nicaragua. Also released were pictures of guerrillas using Soviet AK-47 assault rifles and Soviet-type grenades. "This evidence suggests that the guerrillas are not armed primarily with American weapons captured from the Salvadoran army, but with American weapons supplied by Vietnam through some transshippers — Cuba and Nicaragua," the American commander said.

He said government troops also had collected information from statements made by rebel commander Alejandro Montenegro, who was captured in Tegucigalpa in 1982.

"He stated publicly, 'The majority of M-16s came from Vietnam to Cuba. Cuba to Managua. Managua to El Salvador,'" Gen. Gorman said.

He attributed U.S. information to improved intelligence-gathering efforts by government troops.